AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claim 19 without prejudice or disclaimer of its underlying subject matter.

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (currently amended) An apparatus for filtering electronic mail and notifying a user, residing in a set top box connected between a television content provider, an Internet provider having an e-mail server, and a television, comprising:

a software program application which enables a user to specify e-mail filter criteria and a notification icons which then retains and stores said e-mail filter criteria and said notification icons;

a querying module contained within said software program application which queries said e-mail server to determine whether e-mail fulfilling said e-mail filter criteria has arrived at said e-mail server; and

a notifying module also contained within said software program application,

wherein, upon arrival of an e-mail fulfilling said e-mail filter criteria, said software program application notifies the user by posting said notification icons to the set top box.

2. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

the connection between said set top box and said e-mail server is permanent, so that said software program application continually queries said e-mail server.

3. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

the connection between said set top box and said e-mail server is non-permanent, so that said <u>software program</u> application queries said e-mail server at specific timed intervals.

4. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

said set top box contains a multi-tasking Operating System and said <u>software program</u> application runs on top of said Operating System.

5. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

said set top box contains a single-tasking Operating System and said <u>software program</u> application remains in memory as a Terminate and Stay Resident program and runs intermittently at user-configurable intervals.

6. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

said <u>software program</u> application further includes means for notifying the user of the existence of e-mail messages fulfilling said e-mail filter criteria through a <u>said</u> notification icon on the television screen.

7. (previously presented) An apparatus as in claim 6, wherein

said notification icon is configurable by the user, and reflects the content of the e-mail filter criteria.

8. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

said <u>software program</u> application further includes means for notifying the user through the use of a tone generated through the television speaker.

9. (previously presented) An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein

said tone is configurable by the user, and reflects the content of the e-mail filter criteria.

10. (previously presented) An apparatus as in claim 6, wherein

said notifying means notifies the user of a plurality of said e-mail messages wherein each e-mail message satisfies different filter criteria and has a different user notification icon.

11. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

said <u>software program</u> application further includes means for querying said e-mail server upon power-up of said set top box, and immediately notifies the user of the existence of any e-mail messages satisfying the user-specified e-mail filter criteria.

12. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

said <u>software program</u> application notifies the user via a pager rather than through said set top box.

13. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

said software program application notifies the user of the existence of a telephone
call with Caller ID satisfying said e-mail filter criteria, instead of an e-mail message.

14. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

said software program application notifies the user of another user attempting to
make Instant Message contact with said first the user.

15. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

newer versions of said software program application are downloaded to said set top
box by said Internet provider.

16. (previously presented) An apparatus as in claim 15, wherein

said downloading of newer versions can distinguish between different types of set top
boxes, and make adjustments to the content of said download accordingly.

17. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

said software program application is not resident on said set top box, but is resident
on said e-mail server.

18. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein

said set top box is connected to said e-mail server through a middle server, where said <u>software program</u> application is resident on said middle server.

19. (canceled)

20. (currently amended) An e-mail filtering and notification apparatus, comprising:

set top box, connected between a TV content provider, an Internet provider having an e-mail server, and a TV;

user-input means for allowing a user to specify e-mail filter criteria and <u>a</u> notification icons;

retaining and storing means for retaining and storing said criteria and <u>said notification</u> icons;

querying means, for querying said e-mail server to determine whether e-mail fulfilling said user criteria has arrived at said e-mail server;<u> and</u>

notification means for notifying the user of said arrival by posting said notification icons to the Set Top Box,

wherein said notification icons relate<u>s</u> to the subject matter of said arriving e-mail.

21. (currently amended) A software program application A computer readable <u>medium</u> for filtering electronic mail and notifying a user, residing on a set top box connected

between a television content provider, an Internet provider having an e-mail server, and a television, comprising: ;

said a software program application that enables ing a user to specify e-mail filter criteria and a notification icons which then retains and stores said e-mail filter criteria and said notification icons;

a querying module which that queries said e-mail server to determine whether e-mail fulfilling said e-mail filter criteria has arrived at said e-mail server; and

a notifying module wherein, upon arrival of an e-mail fulfilling said criteria, said software program application notifies the user by posting said notification icons to the set top box.